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LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A guard for protecting the sides of a pallet on which goods can be stacked or a merchandise grouping placed on a support surface, the guard comprising:

a plurality of modular guard sections, each section being couplable to an adjacent section to surround at least a portion of the perimeter of a pallet or merchandise grouping, each modular guard section having top and bottom portions, the bottom portion being wider than the top portion making each modular guard section [[a]] substantially wedge or triangular shape in cross section to increase the stability of the guard section; and

the guard sections each having a complementary portion of a joint for coupling the sections together.

2. (original) The guard of claim 1, wherein the complementary portions of the joint allow the guard sections to be coupled together to form a corner or in a straight line.

3. (original) The guard of claim 2, wherein the complementary sections of the joint allow the guard section to be arranged at any angle between and including 90° and a straight line.

4. (original) The guard of claim 2, wherein the complementary joint sections comprise a projection on one guard section and a recess in another guard section.

5. (withdrawn) The guard of claim 3, wherein the complementary joint sections comprise a pivotal connection.

6. (original) The guard of claim 1, further comprising signage on an outwardly facing surface of at least one guard section.